

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Office Action September 26, 2006 in which the Examiner rejected claims 14-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Claim 14 claims a method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure, comprising the steps of laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position on a die base using a plurality of thrust mechanisms. The die has a bottom plate and the sidewalls form a recess for receiving the ceramic layered structure. The ceramic layered structure is vertically pressed in the recess between the bottom plate and a top die and while lateral force is applied via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in horizontal directions toward the recess.

Through the method of the claimed invention, laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position using a plurality of thrust mechanisms and vertically pressing a ceramic layered structure while applying the lateral force via the thrust mechanism as claimed in claim 14, the claimed invention provides a method of pressing a ceramic stacked layer to prevent the layered structure from expanding in a horizontal direction when pressed. The prior art does not show, teach or suggest the invention as claimed in claim 14.

Claims 14-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over *Fink* (U.S. Patent 529,254) in view of *Mori et al.* (U.S. Patent 5,370,760).

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103. The claims have been reviewed in light of the Office Action, and for reasons which will be set forth below, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to the claims and allows the claims to issue.

Fink appears to disclose a machine for pressing a bundling cigars that will be effective in its operation and possess the required strength and durability necessary to successfully and quickly press the cigars ready to be placed in the box. (Page 1, column 1, lines 13-17). The bundling device rests upon the support H and consists of the bottom J provided with laterally and horizontally adjustable sides K, which sides have extensible sections L. (Page 1, column 1, lines 85-89). By turning the thumb-screw in the opposite direction the pressure upon the bar is removed thus allowing the free adjustment of sides by moving them laterally and horizontally to adapts the cigars in a layer and any number of layers by increasing the height of the sides. (Page 2, column 1, lines 2-9). Bracing heads O are employed to form braces and supports the sides L when the presser-head F is brought down upon the cigars, said bracing-heads being adjustably connected to screw-rods P which have their bearings in suitable brackets R. These screw-rods P are moved back and forth as circumstances require by means of thumb-nuts *t* engaging with the screw threads upon the rods, and the bracing-heads O are capable of vertical adjustment by means of grooves in the heads with which engage blocks upon the ends of the screw-rods. This adjustment of the bracing-heads O adapts the heads to the extensible sections L when raised to bundle a full box of one hundred cigars. (Page 2, column 1, lines 37-52).

Thus, *Fink* is merely directed to a pressing and bundling machine for cigars. Nothing in *Fink* shows, teaches or suggests a method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure as claimed in claim 14. Rather, *Fink* is merely directed to a machine for pressing and bundling cigars.

Furthermore, *Fink* merely discloses two adjustable sides K. Nothing in *Fink* shows, teaches or suggests sidewalls forming a recess for receiving a ceramic layered structure as claimed in claim 14. Rather, *Fink* only discloses two sides and thus no recess is formed. Furthermore, the lateral walls of *Fink* are not for receiving a ceramic layered structure.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's citation of *Fink*. Applicant respectfully points out that the object of *Fink* is to bundle and stack cigars while the technical field of *Fink* is a cigar press. Nothing in *Fink* shows, teaches or suggests the technical field of the present invention of a pressing device and method for a ceramic stack layer.

Mori et al. appears to disclose a method of manufacturing a multilayer ceramic electronic component. (Column 1, lines 7-8). Referring to FIG. 1, a ceramic laminate 13 is first prepared by stacking a plurality of ceramic green sheets including those provided with conductor films 12 which are formed to be distributed on central portions along surface directions thereof. On the other hand, also prepared is a die assembly 18 including an upper punch 14 which comes into contact with a first major surface of the ceramic laminate 13, and a base 17 including a frame 15 which encloses the peripheries of the upper punch 14 and the ceramic laminate 13 and a base plate 16 which comes into contact with a second major surface of the ceramic laminate 13 in a manner opposite to the upper punch 14. While the frame 15 and the base 16 forming the base 17 are separable from each other in the die assembly 18 according to this embodiment, the frame 15 and the base plate 16 may be mechanically integrated with each other. The feature of this embodiment resides in the structure of the upper punch 14. This upper punch 14 is divided into an outer

peripheral portion 19 which comes into contact with peripheral edge portions of the first major surface of the ceramic laminate 13 and a body portion 20 which comes into contact with a central portion of the first major surface, so that these portions separately press the ceramic laminate 13. (Column 4, lines 32-56).

Thus, *Mori et al.* merely discloses an upper punch 14 divided into outer peripheral portions 19 which come into contact with peripheral edge portions of a ceramic laminate 13 and a body portion 20 which comes into contact with a central portion of the ceramic laminate 13. Nothing in *Mori et al.* shows, teaches or suggests a) laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position using a plurality of thrust mechanisms or b) vertically pressing the ceramic layered structure while applying lateral force in horizontal directions to the sidewalls as claimed in claim 14. Rather, *Mori et al.* merely discloses an upper punch 14 divided into outer peripheral portion 19 and body portion 20.

Additionally, *Mori et al.* merely discloses vertically pressing the ceramic portion. Nothing in *Mori et al.* shows, teaches or suggests laterally holding sidewalls of a die using thrust mechanisms in a horizontal direction as claimed in claim 14. Rather, the frame portion 15 of *Mori et al.* is not disclosed as being held at a predetermined position or applied with a lateral force in a horizontal direction toward a recess as claimed in claim 14.

The combination of *Fink* and *Mori et al.* would not be possible since *Fink* is directed to a cigar press and cannot be combined with the manufacturing method of a multilayer ceramic electronic component as taught by *Mori et al.* Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner explain why a cigar press for quickly pressing cigars into a box can be combined with manufacturing a multilayer ceramic electronic

component of *Mori et al.* Applicant respectfully submits that the references cannot be combined nor is there is any motivation to combine the references. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Claims 15-21 depend from claim 14 and recite additional features. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 15-21 would not have been obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over *Fink* and *Mori et al.* at least for the reasons as set forth above. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claims 15-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

New claim 22 has been added. Applicant respectfully submits that this claim is also in condition for allowance.

Thus it now appears that the application is in condition for reconsideration and allowance. Reconsideration and allowance at an early date are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact, by telephone, the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the currently set shortened statutory period, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge
our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

Date: January 26, 2007

By:

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Marcie Emas', written over a horizontal line.

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